

賓州大學「認識佛教觀點」座談會報導

Report of the “Understanding Buddhist Perspectives” panel at University of Pennsylvania

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The week of April 7 to 14, 2018, was the second annual interfaith week at the University of Pennsylvania. Penn Buddhism Club was holding its first big panel “Understanding Buddhist Perspectives”. It invited three panelists that represent different Buddhism lineages: Theravada, Mahayana and Won Buddhism. The panelists were Dharma Master Jin Jr, the assistant professor from Dharma Realm Buddhist University; Dr. Justin McDaniel, the chair of the Religious Study department at Penn; and Reverent Hojin Park, the chair of the Buddhist Studies at Won Institute. The event welcomed about 35-40 people who gathered to hear the shared wisdom of the panelists.

When introducing their tradition, all panelists stressed the importance of non-attachment. While Dharma Master Jin Jr phrased it as “inner work,” Dr. McDaniel directly mentioned the concept of non-attachment as the primary teaching of Theravada tradition, giving a practical example: “meet others with fresh eyes.” Rev. Hojin explained that the circle symbol in Won Buddhism is a symbol of inner nature, completeness, and interconnectedness with other living beings.

As for the core teaching of their traditions, Dharma Master Jin Jr focused on the six paramitas; Rev. Hojin stressed the importance of living a mindful and grateful life. Dr. McDaniel mentioned the practice of Brahmavihara or the four immeasurables, adding that in his tradition, instead of asking to which tradition one belongs, people often inquire under which teacher one is learning.

Throughout the panel discussion, the panelists’ key points in their responses to the questions diverge or overlap with one another from time to time, which inspired the audience to view the questions from different angles. When asked if you consider Buddhism to be a religion, philosophy, or both? Both Dharma Master Jin Jr and Rev. Hojin answered with both, yet Dr. McDaniel proposed that it was neither. He explained that the origins of these words are Greek (philosophy) and Roman (religion), so they may fail to capture what Buddhism actually is. Buddhists do not talk about Buddhism using either term. Instead, they talk about taking refuge in the Dharma. Just like everyone has phones these days, we all in a way are taking refuge in our phones to make decisions. It is a matter of what we turn to first.

The panelists also had different perspectives when asked to talk about the

4月7日至14日，是賓州大學第二屆宗教文化交流週，賓大佛學社藉此舉行「認識佛教觀點」座談會，法界佛教大學的助理教授比丘尼近智師受邀參加，同時應邀擔任講者的還有賓州大學宗教研究部門主席賈斯丁·麥克丹尼爾教授，以及圓佛教學院的主席朴虎鎮。三位主講者分別代表佛教大乘、小乘和韓國圓佛教的傳承，總共有35至40名學生參加。

在介紹自己所學習的佛教支流時，三位主講者都強調「無著」的重要性。近智師將其詮釋為「內心的修行」，麥克丹尼爾教授則用「摘掉有色眼鏡」的例子，直接指出「不執著」是小乘佛教的根本教義。朴虎鎮解釋圓佛教的標誌「O」的含義——本性、圓滿以及與其他眾生的內在聯繫。

當談到佛教傳統的中心教義時，近智師解釋了六波羅蜜，朴虎鎮則強調知足、正念的重要性，麥克丹尼爾教授則提到四無量心，並且強調小乘佛教在乎自己所依止的老師，勝過於所依止的傳統部派。

當被提問「佛教是宗教、哲學，還是兩者兼而有之」時，近智師與朴虎鎮都同意是兩重含義，麥克丹尼爾教授則認為兩者都不是。他解釋，英文中的「哲學」一詞來源於希臘，而「

common misconception about Buddhism that people have. Dharma Master Jin Jr pointed out that the pursuit of spiritual experiences is not the ultimate goal of Buddhism. She underscored that when we learn about Buddhism, we are also “unlearning.” Rev. Hojin explained how worshipping Buddha is an approach to cultivate our mind, instead of just a form of ritual. Interestingly, the three panelists all related to their characters when responding to the question “How Buddhism has changed your lifestyle?” Dharma Master Jin Jr talked about how reading Sutra made her realize that she was selfish; Rev. Hojin mentioned learning Buddhism has given her more courage and Dr. McDaniel disclosed that he was an angry, political, violent, super-reactive, and externally driven person before practicing Buddhism. As far as the writer is aware, a lot of the students are fond of Dr. McDaniel and consider him as a good professor with a sense of humor.

Lastly, to explain reincarnation, Rev. Hojin associated it with how our body is changing every moment, as the cells renew themselves. She further explained that reincarnation could be perceived as happening at any moment, just like everything is impermanent in this world and our habitual tendencies play a big role in this process.

During the Q&A session, students asked questions, such as what liberation means, how to maintain an unattached state, what inner practice a stressed student can do, the practice of vegetarianism in Buddhism, how to seek refuge, and how to know whether Buddhism is right for me. Dharma Master Jin Jr answered that liberation is to be free from the limitations of the mind, which is bound by habits; thus, we have to unbind and deconstruct our mind.

To the question of maintaining an unattached state and not be affected by emotions, Rev. Hojin explained that emotion is a natural state. When you are mindful, emotion has a less of an impact on you; and as you practice more, naturally emotion will become less. Dharma Master Jin Jr responded to the same question by giving a two-dart analogy. She elaborated by saying, “when you feel pain, process it, and let it go. That’s (how you avoid) the second dart. It’s going to be a process. There’s no one way. The Middle Way is an ongoing process.”

Overall, this panel discussion gave students a chance to expand their knowledge of various Buddhist traditions within Buddhism, to bring up their doubts, and clear up misconceptions. As Buddhism continues to establish itself in the West, we hope that this kind of dialogue among university students will serve as a stepping stone for them to explore and discover the true meaning of life’s purpose, and further motivate them to deepen their “inner work” of the mind, in order to create a harmonious and peaceful space within and without, in every society and in every land. ❀

宗教」一詞來源于羅馬，兩者不能囊括佛教的核心，佛教徒也不常使用這兩個詞來談論佛教。相對地，他們會說「皈依佛法」。所謂皈依，就是遇到問題時，第一時間想到的歸投。時下人人都依賴手機來做決定，因此從某種程度上來說，我們都「皈依」了手機。

在回答關於佛教的常見誤解時，近智師提到學習佛法不是為了追求神通，而是一個「返本還源」的過程。朴虎鎮解釋了拜佛是一種心靈的修行，不是僅僅外在的儀式。另外有趣的是，被問及「佛教如何改變他們」時，三位主講人都提到性格的轉變：「研讀經典，使我漸漸意識到自己是一個很自私的人。」近智師這樣形容自己。朴虎鎮說，「佛教讓我變得更勇敢」，麥克·丹尼爾教授透露，學佛以前他曾是一個暴躁、極端、易怒的人。就筆者所知，麥克丹尼爾教授可是知識淵博、幽默風趣，深受學生歡迎的一位教授。

最後，當解釋「輪迴」的概念時，朴虎鎮將它與身體每分每秒的新陳代謝聯繫在一起，進而說明輪迴就在每個當下，世界一切不停變化，無有恆常，習氣將決定我們的去向。

學生們提出了很多問題，例如：什麼是自由，如何維持不著的心態？作為學生怎樣用內在的修行來應對壓力？佛教的素食主義？如何皈依，和如何知道佛教適合自己？近智師回答，自由是從內心的束縛中解脫出來，而這些束縛是由習慣性的思維構成的，因此我們需要重視內心，解除綁定。

如何維持無著的心態，不被情感影響？朴虎鎮回答情感是一種自然的狀態，當有正念的時候，情感對你的掌控會變少；隨著你修行的深入，情感也會自然地減少。近智法師也補充「第二支箭」的譬喻，解釋：「當你感受到痛楚時，認識它，並放下，這是（免受）第二支箭（的方法）。這是一個過程，沒有一定的方法。中道就是不斷調整適應的一個過程。」

這次座談會讓學生們有機會認識佛教中的不同傳統，提出疑問，並且釐清偏差的知見。隨著佛法在西方扎根奠基，我們衷心地希望這樣的對話能成為一方墊腳石，幫助年輕世代瞭解和發現生活的真義，開啟「內心的修行」，讓和諧充滿每一個角落。❀